

Dear Honorable Judge Martinez,  
I submit this letter on the behalf of Justin Costello.  
Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

My name is Ann Costello and I am the mother of Justin. My husband and I are overwhelmed, saddened and shocked by the charges brought forth by Justin.

We do not condone what Justin is charged with. We only ask that you have some compassion and leniency when it comes to his sentencing.

We are simple people . Justin was brought up in a loving, catholic family. He was always a happy child and had such sweetness and kindness about him. He would always help out his grandparents with such unconditional love to give. We are not sure how he went down this dark path or when. He did and still does have some wonderful qualities as a person . He just needs to find his way back and with your help, and guidance he can find his way back. We love him dearly.

We will not be attending the hearing as we are living in South Carolina. Due the financial and health issues ,we feel it would be best to visit him at his next location ,if possible. We are in our 70's and wishing for a closer location to visit.

Again, thank you for reading this letter.  
Sincerely,  
Ann Costello

Armoni Easley  
Co-founder & CEO  
Project Optimism, Inc. 501c3  
www.projectoptimism.org  
916-621-7406

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Armoni Easley, and I'm the co-founder and CEO of Project Optimism, a nonprofit based in Sacramento and Los Angeles, California. Our organization fosters optimism through personal and professional development services and community engagement. We are designed to align the skills and expertise of community members with the unique needs of the community. This is done through community engagement, K- college programs/ curriculums, educational consulting, and personal & professional development.

I was first introduced to Justin Costello through a mutual friend who shared Justin's passion for helping underserved kids and their communities. I quickly learned that as a child, Justin also grew up without resources and mentors in an underserved community. His excitement about helping and connecting with my organization to make a difference for these kids was well-received. On our first call, he asked many good questions and wanted to know how he could help our organization attain its goals. I shared that the kids could use school supplies, so he offered to purchase backpacks and school supplies for the back-to-school season. I was grateful for his generosity and willingness to help without hesitation. He then offered to come and talk to the kids and meet our team members. Unlike many busy people, Justin followed through on his promises. He showed up with his wife, Katrina, and spent time on campus learning about the program and our team. He spoke to the kids and shared his story to help inspire them to do well in school so that they can achieve their dreams and do greater good for humanity. Justin's time, resources, and generosity had a positive impact on the lives of these kids. Justin is a special person with a big heart and wants to have a good effect on the world. It's rare to find a genuine person like Justin who cares and takes the time to show up to make a difference. I believe if more people had a heart like Justin's and were do-gooders, more kids from under-served high-risk communities would grow up believing they, too, can achieve greatness and attain their dreams.

It saddens me to hear about Justin's circumstances and situation. We were looking forward to having him participate in more mentorships and visits. However, humans make mistakes, and I believe their character shouldn't be primarily based on their mistakes. Instead, we need to view them for the good they do because of their mistakes and give them a chance to be better and do better. I believe Justin is someone who has likely learned his lesson and will come out of this, focusing on making the community and world around him a better place. If we couldn't be compassionate, empathetic, and understanding of others, we wouldn't have organizations like Project Optimism doing what we do and making a difference in the lives of hundreds to thousands of under-represented youths.

I chose to write this letter because I felt strongly about wanting to request leniency for Justin. Not everyone deserves a second chance; not everyone learns their lessons. I believe Justin does and has- is a kind human who wouldn't intentionally want to hurt others, and more importantly, I think he would like to help people do good for themselves and their communities. I've witnessed him help people and kids

he has never met. I ask that you grant Justin leniency knowing that organizations and communities like mine would benefit significantly from the compassion portrayed in these serious decisions of the courts. I appreciate your consideration and willingness to review my letter and hope that I was able to provide some background on who Justin Costello is as a human, a community member, and a person who believes in making a difference for those who need it most.

Thanks for your consideration.

Armoni Easley  
aeasley@projectoptimism.org  
916-621-7406



April 12, 2023

To the Honorable Judge Presiding in the Matter of Justin Costello:

I am writing this letter in support of Justin Costello. I sincerely believe that Mr. Costello deserves the court's compassion by using your discretion in favor of Mr. Justin Costello. And not for any other reason than the facts warranting your honor to exercise your discretion in this fashion.

In my nearly twenty years of professional experience, fifteen of those as a licensed attorney in the state of California, and nine of those fulfilling roles in the public sector, as a public servant, I am keenly aware of the needs of my community. I am well qualified to advocate for the public good, given that I have dedicated my entire adult career to serving the public interest. I currently serve as the Chair for the Yolo County Library Foundation, the City of Woodland Manufactured Home Fair Practices Commission Chair, and on the board of the Yolo County Court Appointed Special Advocates. Making decisions that benefit the community is at the core of who I am.

I have the privilege of knowing Justin through his wife Katrina. Katrina and I are both UC Davis Aggies and have collaborated professionally on projects serving the public's best interest. I know Katrina to be an inherently honest, hardworking, and trustworthy individual with sound judgment as to character. When I met Justin nearly two years ago, it was clear that Justin was someone with whom I shared a great deal in terms of our approach to community and philanthropy.

In the time I have known him, I have personally seen Justin demonstrate his commitment and service to his communities. He has donated his time and money to multiple charities serving underserved women and children, such as Toys for Tots and Mary's Place, a local nonprofit that shelters victims of abuse and provides them clothing, job training, and counseling in addition to housing. Justin donates his time to support elders in his community, particularly former veterans needing assistance with rides to doctors' appointments. In my region, Justin along with Katrina donated 500 backpacks including supplies to Project Optimism for at-risk and under-represented youths of Sacramento. They also volunteered their personal time through mentorship and speaking engagements.

Justin has demonstrated himself as an individual who goes above and beyond for people in need. He answers the call when he doesn't need to and never seeks attention for the time, energy, and money that he donates. The only reason you are finding out about Mr. Costello's work today is that he finds himself in this extremely unfortunate position before the court. While I don't know

Benjamin Morris Cadranal, Esq., M.S.  
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the specific facts of the case and realize that Justin has entered a guilty plea acknowledging harm to individuals and our society, the day-to-day Justin that I got to know is not a reflection of Justin before the court under the circumstances.

At his root, Justin is a good human being. Incarcerating Justin will reinforce the idea that Justin is beyond a second chance. I believe that Justin has earned a second chance to demonstrate to the court, the people he has harmed, and society, that he is worthy of that chance. Justin also possesses great skill and business acumen, from my personal interactions. I believe that Justin's ability to rightfully earn income, sooner rather than later, will begin to address the economic harm that he may have caused and needs to repay as part of this plea. Sentencing Justin to confinement will only greatly limit his ability to repay those debts.

For this and all the reasons I articulated above, I urge the court to use the maximum discretion afforded it under the sentencing guidelines to allow Justin to rebuild himself in the image and standard the court has set for him. I am certain that such a determination will effectively deter Justin in the future and serve the interests of justice. I know that Mr. Costello will prove to the court that he is worthy of such deference.

Thank you for your consideration, your Honor.

Most Respectfully,

*Benjamin Cadranel*

Benjamin Morris Cadranel

Honorable Judge Martinez,

I write to you on behalf of Justin Costello and his case for sentencing that you will be presiding over on April 21, 2023. This letter is to serve as a character reference to relay past aspects of Justin's personal behavior that I hope you'll take into consideration as part of your sentencing deliberation.

In reading the charges against him and the plea agreement he will be presenting, there is no doubt that he has time to serve for his criminal actions. As his cousin, I find the whole story very sad, disappointing and frustrating. It deeply frustrates me because Justin, from an early age, was blessed with many gifts. When he channeled his gifts in a positive direction they resulted in bringing opportunity, joy and a sense of accomplishment to those engaged in his service and community-minded endeavors.

Before I present a few examples of the positive nature of Justin Costello, I'd first like to ask your patience to provide some brief background. Justin was brought up in the working-class city of Rockford, Illinois in a blue-collar atmosphere where his family had lived for some time. His mother, Ann, was the daughter of a hard-working traveling seed salesman whose dream was to someday own his own storefront so he could spend more time with his family. He accomplished that dream, only to die shortly after its realization of a heart attack in the family home. Ann was 11 years old at the time and that one incident rippled through the family for many years to follow. It left our beloved grandmother with a new business she knew little about and a new home and mortgage she had inherited with no choice but to do all she could to survive. Fortunately, things worked out for the family with Ann's sister Sue taking the initial lead and her brother Larry coming back from a promising journalism career in Chicago to help run the family business and eventually begin his own successful business endeavor that supported the family for many years to follow.

I share this background because the shadow of Ann's father remained with the family for many years in mostly positive Midwestern work-ethic kinds of ways, but also in the realm of unrealized dreams. To the next generation's great benefit (that included Justin and myself) we were enfolded in love by our grandmother and encouraged to follow our own paths and talents as we built our lives. Ann, married her high school sweetheart (now together for 50 years), eventually moved her family to Wisconsin, and began a new chapter in which Justin and his brother Jason thrived.

One of Justin's strengths was his communication abilities and sense of humor. It made him a natural leader in a number of school activities including student government which eventually led to him mounting a campaign for state political office in his early twenties. He was trounced by his opponent, but worked hard to make a case to serve his constituents. Justin also excelled in sports-related activities winning tournaments in martial arts as a young man. Through all these activities he sought to bring a sense of dedication, pride in accomplishment, but also a care to include those he loved.

On a personal level, Justin has always cared deeply about his loved ones and tried to express that love in different ways. He has looked for opportunities that might provide extra ways or resources for his immediate and extended family, not because they had asked, but because he wanted to exercise a part of himself through generosity. One such small example was a project he and I collaborated on for the entire family and many extended contacts of our beloved Grandmother Gert we all called Gram. I felt called to process her passing by writing a book about the life lessons she had taught me and all her grandchildren by her actions and expressed love. The book was entitled "Gram's Gems", and while I was able to do the work of composing, researching and proofing, I did not have the resources to be able to self-publish the book myself. Justin gladly stepped in to help defray any costs required so we could publish and share the story of a very impactful woman to many people's lives. When we shared the book at a family reunion it was a very emotional experience for all of us.

Justin would also make time during his business travels when working in the corporate world to stop by and check in on my young family. He wanted to support us in our process to create a loving home and let us know he admired what it took to form and cultivate a family.

Justin's own family, Dennis and Ann Costello and brother Jason, were loving, supportive and trusting that his skills would allow him to navigate his own course. He clearly had a degree of ambition that seemed in ways foreign to what they knew and Justin was provided the latitude to create his own path.

Here is where I'd like to interject my own observations of why someone like Justin, with so much promise and a fair amount of privilege may be where he finds himself today. As he found success in his professional endeavors, it seems he may have been enamored by role models who possessed a high aptitude for risk and a compartmentalizing of their business and personal lives. His mentors seemed to plant in him the promise of great potential for those unafraid to pursue business ventures in an aggressive manner. And for some time, Justin was rewarded for that kind of professional behavior and began to surround himself with like-minded people willing to push the boundaries of moral business practices.

Now, only Justin made the decisions he did to break the law and he must now pay for those decisions.

In closing, I ask for your Honor's humble consideration of the world we are living in at present. Surrounded by anger, fear, blatant lies, corruption, gaslighting, polarization. It's a scary place out there to navigate. Those who possess certain abilities can use them to try to effect good or can be pulled into the evil thread of thought that makes them think they are able to work around the law without the consequences that ultimately come. And, unfortunately, every family is touched by the human violence of these actions. Greed is so enticing, so mesmerizing to some, that it amplifies their flaws and overtakes them as the web they weave becomes more and more complex.

Justin Costello is a flawed man. He's hurt several with his crimes and I trust your sentencing will fairly reflect his actions. As you deliberate, I hope you'll also consider that he has goodness within him and a lot of positive things to offer if his energy and abilities are channeled in a positive and lawful direction. He will need to make amends and find forgiveness to start his life again. You can help redirect him in a direction of productivity.

With sincere thanks for your consideration.

Daniel Pawlus  
(cousin to Justin Costello)



April 1st, 2023

To the Honorable Judge Presiding over this matter:

I am writing this letter of support asking for leniency on behalf of Justin Costello. I feel strongly about writing this letter because I believe in reform and restitution, and I was not aware of the circumstances in this matter when I married Justin.

I have been married to Justin for approximately two years and have come to know him for his kind heart. Justin is not perfect; nobody is. When I decided to marry Justin, I fell for his good- we wanted to positively impact society and the world together. Even in our vows, we promised to do great things together. I chose to marry him because we were aligned in our wants for a better world. Our love started with a friendship and developed with time into a strong bond; we helped our families, valued our friendships, helped meaningful causes, cared for our animals, and loved to experience many cultures and foods. We had a genuine friendship and connection over the meaningful things in life.

As I write this, the flashback of my first real experience of Justin's genuine heart vividly shows up. It was June of 2020, and I woke up to a birthday surprise during the COVID shutdowns, where he had the entire board of Mary's Place (an organization that helps women of domestic violence with jobs, clothing, food, and shelter) sing happy birthday to me and thank me for the generous birthday present Justin contributed on my behalf- helping a handful of abused women and children! I was so moved by his gift, this man knew me so well, and he knew what would touch my heart. This is the real, genuine, and authentic side of Justin. He cares a lot about people and their well-being- especially the vulnerable.

Today, as I continue to hurt and face moments of confusion and sorrow, I still hold on to the light and pray that good will come from all this. Humans are wired to learn and grow if given a second chance, and Justin deserves a second chance. I'm sure the various supportive letters you have received from others have given you the necessary insight into who Justin is - good at the core with a big heart- I would never have married him otherwise.

I ask that you consider my letter and apply empathy for those who have made mistakes but deserve a chance to be better for it. I want to be clear; my life has been greatly impacted negatively by all this; my name was destroyed in the media, my professional reputation has been tarnished, I lost clients and source of income, I've lost friendships and experienced depression and PTSD, but I still chose to write a letter because it's vital that my voice gets heard. Unfortunately, the system isn't fair and creates casualties for those who don't deserve it. Thank you for this opportunity, and I ask that, your honor, you will consider my letter and provide leniency where possible.

Best,  
Katrina Rosseini

Keristen Holmes  
Anchor & Reporter

[REDACTED]  
San Diego, CA 92101  
March 11, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I've known Justin Costello for a little more than three years. I was introduced to him as my friend Katrina's husband. They met, fell in love, and married against all odds (because, in my opinion – both had lived a full life and were fortunate to find each other at later stages in life.) I'll never forget watching them together and feeling their love, joy, and mutual admiration for each other. I remember feeling lucky to be in their presence with so much love in the air. It was easy to love Justin as Katrina's partner because he treated her, me, and anyone in his presence with such careful consideration. I've always paid close attention to how people treat others who can't necessarily return the kindness, and Justin exceeded all my expectations. His actions and words always showed that he has a kind heart, and as a friend who is very protective of Katrina (and everyone I love) I left our initial meeting and every get-together thereafter knowing in my heart that not only did Katrina meet her partner in life, but that I too had gained a lifelong friend in Justin.

I have come to appreciate Justin as a friend and confidant who has offered wise counsel to me several times over these past few years. As a Catholic, Justin shared his religious and spiritual support during difficult times in my life through encouragement and prayer. I still have the small statue of Mary that Justin gave me along with his prayer for love and peace in my life and for my relationship. To this day, I cherish his thoughtful gift as it is a reminder of our shared faith and prayers. I want you to know Justin through the lens of those who know him for his good heart and well intentions.

I write this letter of support because Justin has become like family to me. My own brother is incarcerated. So, I understand the duality of loving someone who is a great person but may have made mistakes. Justin has realized and owned the errors and likely is punishing himself immensely for hurting the people he loves the most, especially his wife, Katrina. My heart breaks for this beautiful, dynamic couple. I also know that Justin is hurting by the mere thought that he inflicted anguish on anyone with his actions. Forgiving himself will likely take a lot of time. I hope he remembers (and the court remembers) that he is only human, and as humans, we make mistakes. It's how you learn from your mistakes that matters, and I know Justin has learned and grown tremendously from this experience and situation.

I have a passion for serving under-represented youth. Justin shares this commitment to ensuring that today's children are encouraged to be the leaders of tomorrow. I connected Justin to a non-profit that needed financial assistance. Not only did Justin support their cause, but he also exceeded expectations by taking time out of his schedule to spend time with these under-represented youths. Justin and Katrina helped purchase backpacks and school supplies for them, but what I believe had an even more significant impact was the time they spent with these students which had an indelible impact that those kids will never forget. I know this because I heard from organizers that the kids loved their visit so much that they couldn't wait for them to come back again. I know how important those opportunities are because, as a child, I also grew up in similar situations. It's incredibly meaningful, inspires greatness and hope, and lets kids know greatness is attainable. And this is just one example of Justin's positive impact

on kids and under-served communities. I can share so many more stories about Justin to provide you with a fair and balanced perspective on who he is. I am so proud of my friend for sharing his heart, time, and resources to make such a significant difference for those who need it most. As I mentioned earlier, I've known Katrina well for many years, and I've watched her do great things for others and her community; she wouldn't have married Justin if he wasn't a good human at heart and with his genuine intentions.

Because I have my own familial experience with the incarceration system, I completely understand its impact on a person's physical, emotional, and mental well-being. I understand more than most that actions have consequences, but when it comes to our justice system's measure of punishment for crimes in society, I think most can agree that reform is needed and must be seriously considered. That sentiment rings especially true now because Justin would be locked away from society and the people who love him. It's a traumatic experience not just for him but for his loved ones. I pray that Justin's heart and mind survive, and I know they will, however, the impact will be undeniable.

I ask this honorable court to provide a measure of leniency as a form of forgiveness- I believe forgiveness is the thread that keeps humans humane. Humans aren't perfect and make mistakes. However, humans like Justin punish themselves more than any state or government system can. And that, I think, should be the basis for recidivism. Justin is not a repeat offender. He had no criminal record; Justin is a man who made a mistake and now only seeks to grow and be better for it. We all have faced growth in our own ways and in our own lives. The more significant mistake would be depriving society of the gifts that Justin freely shares with those around him and the world. I hope my letter provides you with a different perspective and shares a little of who Justin is at his core and the good he has done for kids, the community, and humanity. Thank you for your time and willingness to review my request.

Thanks for your consideration.

Keristen Holmes



March 27, 2023

The Honorable Judge Martinez:

Dear Sir,

We have known Justin Costello since his birth. We followed him through school games as well as seeing him on holidays. We didn't live in the same city, but close enough to be together on holidays and hat we watched over him and his brother while the parents took a vacation. Both boys were a delight to us and still are.

We've been upfront to Justin that this is not the way to live.

While we are not in approval for what he has done and told him so. We do stand with him as two people who love him and will continue loving him. We believe that Justin, once he's through the legal process and served his time we think with outside help he will make the necessary changes in his life.

His parents are good people and they will help him as he changes his life, as well as those relatives who feel the same as we do. They raised him with values and stressed character, but he has gone astray from those things he has been taught.

We know Justin will make it through his time in incarceration, but firmly believe he has learned a lot from this time and will not repeat it in his life. We are his baptismal guardians, his aunt and uncle, and will assist him in any way we can to stay on the right path.

We hope you'll give consideration to our message and do what you can to help him while you're passing judgment on him.

**Roger and Maureen Fox**

Roger and Maureen Fox

[REDACTED]

Las Vegas, NV 89102-5539

To whom it may concern

I am writing this letter on behalf of Justin Costello. I am aware of the charges he is facing and aware of the possible consequences in terms of possible jail time etc. for the various charges levied against him.

The purpose of my letter is not to contest or weigh in on his actions. That is for the court system to decide. Instead I am trying to put my thoughts down and compartmentalize Justin as a friend that I know vs. Justin as a flawed human being. I am trying in this letter to simply state the facts of why I still answer his phone calls from Tukwila holding facility

I met Justin when he was helping his friend run for Mayor which I thought at the time was a wasted venture based on the less than qualified credentials of his candidate. I assumed he did it out of friendship or loyalty for this individual. Having grown up in New York politics I was surprised that a guy with his street savvy would put that energy into this. I did find his willingness to help despite the odds appealing.

We started to socialize and he would eventually come to my house , bring fresh food and cook his grandmas recipes. During this time I was impressed with his knowledge of the financial world and global politics..

I once told the FBI agents that came to ask questions which I volunteered without counsel, that people are like hand woven rugs. They have a dark side and a light side. I became familiar with Justins light side. I watched him write a charitable check to help out a local Rabbi and his non-profit work He attempted try to find more satisfying and compensated work through his network for my daughter. He has volunteered to consult with a number of my peers and even ex employees to assist in career goals and at times has made phone calls

to share information with family and friends with specific challenges. The compassionate side of Justin was often time illuminate with he would visit and encourage me to enjoy my life after my battle with cancer and made it clear he would always be there if I needed financial assistance or when I am gone be there for my daughter. Justin was very aware of my financial situation and my personal and business life. I certainly did not fit the m.o. of a person he would be able to exploit for large sums of money. I listened to his dreams of donating a lot of money to kids and other charitable causes.

I believe in me he saw some form of role model, "Uncle Mitch" in terms of my social and moral view of the world. He would like to spar with my world view that came from my heritage of a family of social activists and my aunt -Bella Abzug, congresswomen and womens leader. I believe in he was in awe of these people that made a difference outside of just elevating ones wealth. He in many ways was envious of my familys moral guidance and character to the extent that our conversations often time wound up with him conceding that he needs to focus his intelligence on making a better planet.

During this time I was impressed with his confidence in his hope to build his company in Eastern Washington and apparently like others I invested in what I knew was a risky penny stock. Like I told the FBI agents, I am not a victim as much as I was a "schmuck" because the company didn't have a lot to show on its balance sheet. So yes I lost money on a gamble and yes Justins energy and smarts.

I would hope there is a way within the judicial system for a young man to be lucky enough to have an opportunity to make things right besides the confines of a cell. I have seen his heart and his light side.

Redemption is possible in those that acknowledge their mistakes as we are all far from perfect. How to exploit his" light side " when

considering what punishment is appropriate?? But of course that is the challenge , to find a way for those that have bad decisions and have caused harm, to repay in a meaningful way and give back!! It sounds idealistic and perhaps naïve , but as a global citizens, parent and businessman, I would like to believe we have ways not just to fill penitentiaries but demand that people like Justin who are smart and young work hard in the community, hospitals, with seniors whatever rather than getting three square meals a day for their stupidity in an overcrowded penal system. Again probably not possible but he has value as a human being and I have seen that light side.

Thank you

Mitchell Setlow